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ABSTRACT

In December 1973, questionnaires were sent to academic libraries of varying size to discover which book and materials selection aids were used in the library's acquisition process. Aid under consideration included book reviews in library journals, professional subject journals, and publisher's selection/promotional material. The highlights of the survey results are presented in tabular form, arranged first by size of respondent library--small, medium, or large--and secondly by subject speciality: social science, humanities, science, or generalist. Responses are presented in ranked order for the following variables: use of specific reviewing media (such as "Library Journal," "Kirkus," and "Choice"), reasons for nonuse of book reviews, use of unspecified subject journals, and use of selected publisher's materials. (SL)

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USE OF SELECTION TOOLS

compiled by Thomas K. Fry

May 1974

The following information on the use of book and material selection aids such as book reviews in library journals, professional subject journals, and publisher's selection/promotional material was compiled via a CLA Collection Development Chapter questionnaire which was circulated in the mail September - December, 1973. The results are presented here in tabular form for your convenience.

Organization is by two main categories: (I) Library type and (II) Subject.

I. Three "types" of academic libraries (broken down by introductory information received with the questionnaire):

   A. Small academic library.

      1. Book budget less than $100,000.

      2. Collection size less than 500,000 volumes.

   B. Medium academic library.

      1. Book budget between $100,000 and $500,000.

      2. Collection size between 500,000 and 1,000,000 volumes.

   C. Large academic library.

      1. Book budget over $500,000.

      2. Collection size over 1,000,000 volumes.

II. Subjects clustered by broad area (Soc. Sci., Human., Sci.) and, where warranted by number of responses, in individual subject (Bus. Ad., Geog., Art, Music, etc.).

The response rate of this survey reached 51 percent in the first wave. No financial or clerical support was made available for a follow up. Total number of respondents equalled 140.

I hesitate to make inferences from this data due to the unknown non-respondents; however I do urge you to use the results, perhaps to suggest new review media to use in collection development work or to discard present sources you find to be marginal, or of little or no value. It is my hope that this data will aid the beginning bibliographer or the small, new academic library by giving an overview--based on the experience of others--on vehicles to book and material selection in collection development work in academic libraries.

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Highlights

I. Type of library.
   A. Small academic library ; 13 respondents.
      1. All use Library Journal and Choice (13).
      2. 11 use blurbs, ads, etc.
      3. Only 4 of the 13 use subject journals.
   B. Medium academic library; 68 respondents.
      1. 56 use publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 49 use Library Journal; 46 use Choice.
      3. 43 use subject journals.
   C. Large academic library; 59 respondents.
      1. 49 use publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 44 use a variety of reviewing media ("Other").
      3. 43 use subject journals.
      4. Only 23 use Library Journal; 19 use Choice.
      5. 9 do not use reviews because:
         a. Approval plan brings in most current material.
         b. Reviews are too slow in appearing.

II. Subject area.
   A. Social Science; 38 respondents.
      1. 31 use publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 26 use Library Journal; 25 use Choice.
      3. 25 use subject journals.
   B. Humanities; 33 respondents.
      1. 29 use publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 22 use Library Journal; 21 use Choice.
      3. 20 use subject journals.
   C. Science; 25 respondents.
      1. 23 use publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 21 use subject journals; 14 use Wiley Newsletter.
      3. 8 use Library Journal and Publisher's Weekly.
   D. Generalist; 20 respondents.
      1. 16 use Library Journal and publisher's blurbs, ads, etc.
      2. 15 use Choice.
      3. 10 use subject journals.

Cumulation of frequency of use of selection tools; four most frequently checked responses:

I. All types of academic library (Small, Medium, Large):
   A. Publisher's blurbs, ads, etc. 116
   B. Journals in subject area 90
   C. Library Journal 85
   D. Choice 78

II. All subject areas (Social Science, Humanities, Science, Generalist):
   A. Publisher's blurbs, ads, etc. 99
   B. Journals in subject area 76
   C. Library Journal 72
   D. Choice 61

For complete tabulation of all responses, please see following pages 2 through 12.

I. Three types of academic libraries.

A. Small academic library.

1. 13 respondents; all use reviews.

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Library Journal (13).
1. Choice (13).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (9).
3. Booklist (8).
3. New York Times Book Review (8).
4. Other (Unspecified) (6).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (4).
5. Times' Literary Supplement (4).
6. American Book Publishing Record (3).
7. Hornbook (2).
8. Kirkus (1).
8. Sci-Tech News (1).

3. 4 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (11).
2. Scholarly Books in America (6).
3. Other (Unspecified) (3).
4. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (2).
4. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (2).
4. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (2).
5. The Bookfinder (0).

B. Medium academic library.

1. 68 respondents; 63 use reviews and 5 do not, because (ranked):

1. Other (Unspecified) (2).
2. Reviews are too slow in appearing (1).
2. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (1).
2. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Library Journal (49).
2. Choice (46).
3. Other (Unspecified) (40).
4. New York Times Book Review (28).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (23).
6. Booklist (20).
7. Times' Literary Supplement (18).

8. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (16).
9. American Book Publishing Record (8).
10. Sci-Tech News (7).
11. Hornbook (3).
12. Kirkus (1).

3. 43 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (56).
2. Scholarly Books in America (15).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (9).
4. Other (Unspecified) (7).
5. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (5).
6. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (2).
7. The Bookfinder (1).

C. Large academic library.

1. 59 respondents; 47 use reviews and 12 do not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (9).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (9).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (4).
2. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (4).
3. Reviews are not critical enough (2).
4. Other (Unspecified) (1).
5. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (44).
2. Library Journal (23).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (21).
4. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (20).
4. New York Times Book Review (20).
5. Choice (19).
6. Times' Literary Supplement (10).
7. American Book Publishing Record (8).
8. Booklist (5).
9. Sci-Tech News (3).
10. Kirkus (1).
10. Hornbook (1).

3. 43 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (49).

2. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (14).
3. Scholarly Books in America (11).
4. Other (Unspecified) (7).
5. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (1).
5. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
5. The Bookfinder (1).

II. Subjects clustered by broad area or in individual subject.

A. Generalist (all subjects).

1. 20 respondents; all use reviews.

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Library Journal (16).
2. Choice (15).
3. New York Times Book Review (12).
4. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (11).
5. Booklist (7).
5. Other (Unspecified) (7).
6. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (5).
6. Times' Literary Supplement (5).
7. Sci-Tech News (4).
8. American Book Publishing Record (2).
9. Kirkus (1).
9. Hornbook (1).

3. 10 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (16).
2. Scholarly Books in America (8).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (2).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (2).
4. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
4. Other (Unspecified) (1).
5. The Bookfinder (0).

B. Humanities.

1. 22 respondents; 19 use reviews and 3 do not, because (ranked):

1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (3).
2. Reviews are too slow in appearing (2).
3. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).
4. Reviews are not critical enough (0).
4. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
4. Prefer to make own judgment (0).
4. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Choice (17).
2. Other (Unspecified) (15).
3. Library Journal (14).
3. New York Times Book Review (14).
4. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (11).
4. Times' Literary Supplement (11).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (7).
6. Booklist (6).
7. American Book Publishing Record (4).
8. Kirkus (1).
8. Hornbook (1).
9. Sci-Tech News (0).

3. 13 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (20).
2. Scholarly Books in America (7).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (1).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (1).
3. Other (Unspecified) (1).
4. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
4. The Bookfinder (0).

C. Art.

1. 4 respondents; 3 use reviews and 1 does not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (1).
1. Reviews are not critical enough (1).
1. Prefer to make own judgment (1).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (1).
1. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).
2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (3).
2. Library Journal (2).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (2).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (1).
3. Choice (1).
3. Booklist (1).
4. American Book Publishing Record (0).
4. Kirkus (0).
4. Hornbook (0).
4. Sci-Tech News (0).

4. New York Times Book Review (0).
4. Times' Literary Supplement (0).

3. 4 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (4).
2. Scholarly Books in America (1).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (0).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
3. The Bookfinder (0).
3. Other (Unspecified) (0).

D. Music.

1. 4 respondents; 3 use reviews and 1 does not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (1).
1. Reviews are not critical enough (1).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (1).
2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (0).
2. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (4).
2. Library Journal (3).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (1).
3. American Book Publishing Record (1).
3. Choice (1).
3. Times' Literary Supplement (1).
4. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (0).
4. Booklist (0).
4. Kirkus (0).
4. Hornbook (0).
4. Sci-Tech News (0).
4. New York Times Book Review (0).

3. 2 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (3).
2. Scholarly Books in America (2).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).

3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (0).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
3. The Bookfinder (0).
3. Other (Unspecified) (0).

E. Art and Music.

1. 11 respondents (total of 4 art, 4 music and 3 art/music); 9 use reviews and 2 do not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (2).
1. Reviews are not critical enough (2).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (2).
1. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (2).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (1).
3. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
3. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (9).
2. Library Journal (8).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (5).
4. Choice (4).
5. Times' Literary Supplement (2).
6. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (1).
6. American Book Publishing Record (1).
6. Booklist (1).
6. New York Times Book Review (1).
7. Kirkus (0).
7. Hornbook (0).
7. Sci-Tech News (0).

3. 7 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (9).
2. Scholarly Books in America (4).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (0).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
3. The Bookfinder (0).
3. Other (Unspecified) (0).

F. Social Science.

1. 27 respondents; 25 use reviews and 2 do not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (2).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (2).
2. Reviews are not critical enough (0).

2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (0).
2. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Library Journal (19).
2. Choice (18).
3. Other (Unspecified) (15).
4. New York Times Book Review (12).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (9).
5. Times' Literary Supplement (9).
6. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (5).
7. Booklist (4).
8. American Book Publishing Record (1).
8. Kirkus (1).
9. Hornbook (0).
9. Sci-Tech News (0).

3. 16 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (20).
2. Scholarly Books in America (6).
3. Other (Unspecified) (4).
4. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (3).
5. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (1).
5. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
6. The Bookfinder (0).

G. Business Administration/Economics.

1. 3 respondents; all use reviews.

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (3).
2. Library Journal (2).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (2).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (2).
2. Choice (2).
2. Booklist (2).
3. American Book Publishing Record (1).
3. New York Times Book Review (1).
4. Kirkus (0).
4. Hornbook (0).
4. Sci-Tech News (0).
4. Times' Literary Supplement (0).

3. 2 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (3).
2. Scholarly Books in America (0).
2. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).
2. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (0).
2. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
2. The Bookfinder (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

H. Education.

1. 5 respondents; all use reviews.

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Library Journal (3).
1. Choice (3).
1. Booklist (3).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (2).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (2).
2. New York Times Book Review (2).
2. Times' Literary Supplement (2).
2. Other (Unspecified) (2).
3. American Book Publishing Record (1).
3. Hornbook (1).
4. Kirkus (0).
4. Sci-Tech News (0).

3. 4 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (5).
2. Scholarly Books in America (1).
2. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (1).
2. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
3. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).
3. The Bookfinder (0).
3. Other (Unspecified) (0).

I. Geography.

1. 3 respondents; 2 use reviews and 1 does not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (1).
2. Reviews are not critical enough (0).
2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (0).
2. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (0).
2. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (3).
2. Library Journal (2).
2. Choice (2).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (1).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (1).
3. Booklist (1).
4. American Book Publishing Record (0).
4. Kirkus (0).
4. Hornbook (0).
4. Sci-Tech News (0).
4. New York Times Book Review (0).
4. Times' Literary Supplement (0).

3. 3 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (3).
2. Scholarly Books in America (1).
2. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (1).
2. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (1).
2. Other (Unspecified) (1).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (0).
3. The Bookfinder (0).

J. Combination of Social Sciences and Humanities (no science).

1. 17 respondents; 16 use reviews and 1 does not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (1).
1. Prefer to make own judgment (1).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (1).
1. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).
2. Reviews are not critical enough (0).
2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Other (Unspecified) (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (13).
2. Library Journal (8).
2. Choice (8).
3. Booklist (6).
4. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (5).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (4).
5. American Book Publishing Record (4).
5. Times' Literary Supplement (4).
6. New York Times Book Review (2).
7. Hornbook (1).

7. Sci-Tech News (1).
8. Kirkus (0).

3. 8 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (11).
2. Other (Unspecified) (4).
3. Scholarly Books in America (2).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (2).
4. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
4. The Bookfinder (1).
4. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).

K. Science.

1. 25 respondents; 17 use reviews and 8 do not, because (ranked):

1. Reviews are too slow in appearing (4).
1. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (4).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (2).
2. Other (Unspecified) (2).
3. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).
4. Reviews are not critical enough (0).
4. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (16).
2. Library Journal (8).
2. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (8).
3. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (7).
4. Sci-Tech News (6).
5. American Book Publishing Record (5).
5. Choice (5).
6. Booklist (3).
6. New York Times Book Review (3).
7. Kirkus (0).
7. Hornbook (0).
7. Times' Literary Supplement (0).

3. 21 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (23).
2. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (14).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (3).
3. Other (Unspecified) (3).

4. Scholarly Books in America (0).
4. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).
4. The Bookfinder (0).

L. Forms, e.g. A/V, Serials.

1. 7 respondents; 5 use reviews and 2 do not, because (ranked):

1. Reviewing media do not cover my subjects adequately (1).
1. Other (Unspecified) (1).
2. Reviews are too slow in appearing (0).
2. Reviews are not critical enough (0).
2. Reviewers lack adequate qualifications to make reviews (0).
2. Prefer to make own judgment (0).
2. Approval plan brings in most of the current material (0).

2. Library selection materials, ranked:

1. Other (Unspecified) (7).
2. Library Journal (5).
3. New York Times Book Review (4).
4. Choice (3).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Reviews) (2).
5. Publisher's Weekly (Weekly Record) (2).
5. Hornbook (2).
6. Booklist (1).
6. Times' Literary Supplement (1).
7. American Book Publishing Record (0).
7. Kirkus (0).
7. Sci-Tech News (0).

3. 2 use journals in subject areas.

4. Publisher's selection materials, ranked:

1. Blurbs, announcements, newsletters, catalogs (6).
2. Scholarly Books in America (2).
2. Other (Unspecified) (2).
3. Wiley-Interscience Librarian's Newsletter (1).
3. Bro Dart's Library Books for School & Public Libraries (1).
3. The Bookfinder (1).
4. Combined Catalog of the Book Publishers of Southern Calif. (0).